

We claim:

1. An allocation method in a buyer-driven system comprising:
identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller; and
providing the priority seller with a first look opportunity to satisfy a conditional purchase offer. ✓
2. A method according to claim 1, further comprising providing another of the at least two sellers with a second look opportunity to satisfy the conditional purchase offer.
3. A method according to claim 1, further comprising binding the buyer to the conditional purchase offer.
4. A method according to claim 1, further comprising notifying the buyer that the conditional purchase offer will not be satisfied.
5. A method according to claim 1, further comprising, before identifying one of the at least two sellers as a priority seller, determining which of at least two sellers could satisfy the conditional purchase offer.
6. A method according to claim 1, wherein one of the at least two sellers is an agency-based seller.

7. A method according to claim 1, wherein one of the at least two sellers is a broadcast-based seller.
8. A method according to claim 1, wherein the conditional purchase offer is a binding conditional purchase offer.
9. A method according to claim 1, wherein identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:
- determining a number of first look opportunities due to the at least two sellers;
 - determining a number of first look opportunities given to the at least two sellers;
 - and
 - identifying one of the at least two sellers with the largest deficiency between opportunities given and opportunities due as the priority seller.
10. A method according to claim 1, wherein identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:
- determining a percentage of first look opportunities due to the at least two sellers based on an adjusted market share;
 - determining a percentage of first look opportunities given to the at least two sellers; and
 - identifying one of the at least two sellers with the largest deficiency between percentage of first look opportunities given and percentage of first look opportunities due as the priority seller.

11. A method according to claim 1, wherein identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:

assigning a random number to each of the at least two sellers; and
using the random numbers to identify the priority seller.

12. A method according to claim 1, wherein identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:

determining a market share for each of the at least two sellers; and
identifying one of the sellers having the largest market share that could also satisfy the conditional purchase offer as the priority seller.

13. A method according to claim 1, wherein identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller further includes:

determining a buyer preference metric for each of the at least two sellers; and
using the buyer preference metric to identify one of the at least two sellers as the priority seller.

14. A method according to claim 1, wherein identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller further includes providing an advantage to one of the at least two sellers.

15. A method according to claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether more than one seller price will satisfy the conditional purchase offer; and
 selecting the highest seller price.

16. A method according to claim 1, further comprising:
 determining whether there are other sellers that could satisfy the conditional purchase offer; and
 performing a low price search of the other sellers.

16. An allocation method in a buyer-driven system comprising:
 determining which of a plurality of sellers can satisfy a conditional purchase offer;
 identifying one of the sellers that can satisfy the conditional purchase offer as a first look opportunity seller based on relative market share in a relevant market and number of first look opportunities provided as compared to number of first look opportunities due;

identifying another of the sellers that can satisfy the conditional purchase offer as a second look opportunity seller;

providing the first look opportunity seller with a first look opportunity to satisfy the conditional purchase offer.

~~17.~~ ¹⁶ A method according to claim ~~17~~, further comprising providing the second look opportunity seller with a second look opportunity to satisfy the conditional purchase offer.

~~18.~~ ¹⁶ A method according to claim ~~17~~, further comprising:
determining whether more than one seller price will satisfy the conditional purchase offer; and
selecting the highest seller price.

~~19.~~ ¹⁶ A method according to claim ~~17~~, further comprising:
determining whether there are other sellers that could satisfy the conditional purchase offer; and
performing a low price search of the other sellers.

~~20.~~ ¹⁶ A method according to claim ~~17~~, wherein the relevant market is an origin/destination pair.

~~21.~~ ¹⁶ A method according to claim ~~17~~, further comprising providing an advantage to one of the plurality of sellers.

~~22.~~ ¹⁶ A method according to claim ~~17~~, wherein at least one of the plurality of sellers is an agency-based seller.

23.
24. A method according to claim 14, wherein at least one of the plurality of sellers is a broadcast-based seller.

24.
25. A method according to claim 14, further comprising binding the conditional purchase offer.

26. A system comprising:
a data storage device, for storing information on sellers, a conditional purchase offer and conditional purchase offer rules; and
a processor, for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller and providing the priority seller with a first look opportunity to satisfy the conditional purchase offer according to the conditional purchase offer rules.

27. A system according to claim 26, further comprising a communication port for communicating with the sellers and a buyer.

28. A system for allocation in a buyer-driven system comprising:
means for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller; and
means for providing the priority seller with a first look opportunity to satisfy a conditional purchase offer.

29. A system according to claim 28, further comprising means for providing another of the at least two sellers with a second look opportunity to satisfy the conditional purchase offer.

30. A system according to claim 28, further comprising means for binding the buyer to the conditional purchase offer.

31. A system according to claim 28, further comprising means for notifying the buyer that the conditional purchase offer will not be satisfied.

32. A system according to claim 28, further comprising means for determining which of the at least two sellers could satisfy the conditional purchase offer.

33. A system according to claim 28, wherein one of the at least two sellers is an agency-based seller.

34. A system according to claim 28, wherein one of the at least two sellers is a broadcast-based seller.

35. A system according to claim 28, wherein the conditional purchase offer is a binding conditional purchase offer.

36. A system according to claim 28, wherein means for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:

means for determining a number of first look opportunities due to the at least two sellers;

means for determining a number of first look opportunities given to the at least two sellers; and

means for identifying one of the at least two sellers with the largest deficiency between opportunities given and opportunities due as the priority seller.

37. A system according to claim 28, wherein means for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:

means for determining a percentage of first look opportunities due to the at least two sellers based on an adjusted market share;

means for determining a percentage of first look opportunities given to the at least two sellers; and

means for identifying one of the at least two sellers with the largest deficiency between percentage of first look opportunities given and percentage of first look opportunities due as the priority seller.

38. A system according to claim 28, wherein means for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:

means for assigning a random number to each of the at least two sellers; and

means for using the random numbers to identify the priority seller.

39. A system according to claim 28, wherein means for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller includes:

means for determining a market share for each of the at least two sellers; and

means for identifying one of the sellers having the largest market share that could also satisfy the conditional purchase offer as the priority seller.

40. A system according to claim 28, wherein means for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller further includes:

means for determining a buyer preference metric for each of the at least two sellers; and

means for using the buyer preference metric to identify one of the at least two sellers as the priority seller.

41. A system according to claim 28, wherein means for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller further includes means for providing an advantage to one of the at least two sellers.

42. A system according to claim 28, further comprising:

means for determining whether more than one seller price will satisfy the conditional purchase offer; and

means for selecting the highest seller price.

43. A system according to claim 28, further comprising:

means for determining whether there are other sellers that could satisfy the conditional purchase offer; and

means for performing a low price search of the other sellers.

44. Computer executable software code stored on a computer readable medium, the code comprising:

code for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller; and

code for providing the priority seller with a first look opportunity to satisfy a conditional purchase offer.

45. A computer-readable medium having computer executable software code stored thereon, the code comprising:

code for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller; and

code for providing the priority seller with a first look opportunity to satisfy a conditional purchase offer.

46. A programmed computer comprising:

a memory having at least one region for storing computer executable program code; and

a processor for executing the program code stored in the memory; wherein the program code includes

code for identifying one of at least two sellers as a priority seller; and

code for providing the priority seller with a first look opportunity to satisfy a conditional purchase offer.

47. A method for allocating buyer offers to sellers in a buyer-driven commerce system, comprising the steps of:

receiving from a buyer a conditional purchase offer including a condition, a price, a financial account identifier, and authorization upon fulfillment of said condition to use said financial account identifier to pay said price;

identifying, based on a predetermined metric, one of at least two sellers as a priority seller;

providing said conditional purchase offer to said priority seller;

if said priority seller fills said conditional purchase offer, using said financial account identifier to compensate said priority seller; and

if said priority seller does not fill said conditional purchase offer, then

selecting a second seller, and

providing said conditional purchase offer to said second seller.

48. A method in accordance with claim 47, wherein said metric is selected from the group comprising total market share, relevant market share, random numbers, and buyer preference.

49. A method in accordance with claim 47, and further including the step of keeping the identities of said at least two sellers anonymous from said buyer until said conditional purchase offer is filled.

50. A method in accordance with claim 47, wherein said conditional purchase offer further includes a flexible term that may be specified by a seller.

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